

Tradition can be destroyed in the blink of an eye, but to build and maintain it requires immense time and effort. Japan prides itself on the 12-layered kimono royal costume, which has remained unchanged over thousand of years and a tradition that is unique the world

over. In Kyoto where I live, there are “matsuri,” or festivals, that are similarly ancient, as well as dyeing techniques and customs that exist today unchanged across time.

I began my career as an executive secretary and have had experience as an actress and a

TOURISM  Yokoso! Japan

# *Dressed to Instill Tradition*

A woman with dark hair styled in a traditional Japanese fashion, wearing a light-colored kimono with a dark floral pattern and a yellow obi. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background shows a stone path, a boat filled with goods, and lush greenery.

Yokoso! Japan Ambassador  
Fashion affairs commentator  
**Hiromi Ichida**

hairdresser. In 1963 a famous kimono wholesaler asked me to teach people how to wear a kimono because they feared that without such education, it would become a lost art. That was what launched my long career in the area of kimono education, a development that, when I look back now, was a godsend.

I have worked to disseminate information about Japanese culture, namely the kimono, and have dispatched kimono delegations to

over 100 countries around the world and produced kimono shows in various ways incorporating everything from a traditional Japanese wedding ceremony to Japanese dance. In recent years, the venues of these shows have been packed due to the surge in interest in traditional Japanese culture. During the Toyako G8 Summit in Hokkaido, I was fortunate to be chosen to narrate a portion of the “Tales of Genji” as well as to demonstrate how to wear the 12-layered kimono to the first ladies in attendance.

Although aspects of our modern lifestyles, such as our means of transport and the urban settings in which we live, make it difficult to wear kimono, the interest of young women in kimono is high. I hope that women will be able to wear kimono for the joy of doing so, and not because they feel compelled to do so. I am also interested in the traditional clothing of foreign countries and continue to collect and study them.

### *Profile of Hiromi Ichida*



*Born in Osaka in 1932, Hiromi Ichida graduated from the Kyoto Prefectural University in 1953. Around 1963, she launched activities as a fashion affairs commentator and began to give lessons on Japanese-style dressing, notably kimono wearing, on television and magazines. She was given the title of a contemporary master craftsman, officially called the “Outstanding Skilled Workers” award, by the Minister of*

*Health, Labor and Welfare in 2001. Ichida is currently active as a fashion affairs commentator and an essayist. She also serves as vice chairwoman of the Kyoto City Tourist Association.*



*The Japan Tourism Agency appoints as goodwill ambassadors people actively working to boost awareness of the allure of Japan among people overseas.*